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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Maariv devoted several articles to the first anniversary of President Barack Obama's election.

HaQaretz reported that yesterday in Morocco, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sought to tone down the statements she made in Jerusalem on Saturday. "Israel has done a few things [to renew peace talks], but they need to do much more," Clinton said in Marrakesh ahead of a meeting with Arab ministers about the peace process. "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements," she said. However, Israel is "expressing a willingness to restrain settlement activity. They will build no new settlements, expropriate no land, allow no new construction, or approvals. This offer falls far short of what we would characterize as our position or what our preference would be. But if it is acted upon, it will be an unprecedented restriction on settlements and would have a significant and meaningful effect on restraining their growth," Clinton said, reading from a written statement. She made these statements after Arab ministers said the Arab world was disappointed that not enough was being done to pressure Israel to freeze settlement construction. Citing news agencies' reports, HaQaretz reported that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Senator George Mitchell yesterday in Amman that the PA will not resume peace talks with Israel until all construction in the West Bank settlements is stopped.

DM Ehud Barak was quoted as saying in an interview with Israel Radio that his upcoming visit to the U.S. is meant to promote peace talks and put an end to the occupation. Barak expressed his gratitude to Secretary Clinton and Special Envoy Mitchell for their efforts in the peace process. Barak said: "Israel has an interest to engage in peace talks not because of the Palestinians, but first and foremost for our own sake, not because of the U.S., but mostly for the future of Israel."

HaQaretz cited the belief of security forces investigating suspected Jewish terrorist Yaakov (Jack) Teitel (or Tytell) that he may have committed a number of murders in addition to those he admitted in his interrogation. Media reported that security forces are looking for a possible accomplice. The Jerusalem Post quoted defense officials as saying yesterday that Jewish terror suspects are still

at large in the West Bank.

HaQaretz reported that a joint French-British U.N. initiative would call on Israel and the Palestinians to hold immediate, independent investigations into war crimes allegations stemming from the war in Gaza, as part of a bid to send the Goldstone report back to Geneva and out of the hands of the Security Council or the International Criminal Court at The Hague. The proposal comes before the United Nations General Assembly is scheduled Wednesday to deliberate on the Goldstone report. HaQaretz quoted a source in the Israeli Foreign Ministry as saying that the initiative is a list of "red lines" which was adopted by the 27 members of the European Union. Its main points: 1. A resolution brought for the approval of the General Assembly will not include operational steps, like taking the matter to the Security Council or the International Court of Justice; 2. The resolution would call on Israel and the Palestinians to embark on an independent investigation into the events of Operation Cast Lead, and the allegations of war crimes; 3. The handling of the Goldstone report will return to the U.N. Human Rights Council; and 4. The parties will have to report to the council on the findings of their investigations in a few months. According to the Foreign Ministry source, the document was delivered yesterday by the British and French permanent representatives at the U.N. to the Palestinian Authority delegation at the international body as well as to the representatives of Arab states and the members of the Security Council. Today Arab representatives at the U.N. are expected to complete the first draft of a resolution that will be brought to the General Assembly for a vote. The French and British have emphasized in their exchanges with the Arab representatives that if the "red lines" are not part of the resolution being prepared, the European Union will abstain and may even vote against it -- and expects that much of the international community will as well. HaQaretz cited assessments in Israel that there is little chance the Palestinians will agree to the Franco-British proposal and that Jerusalem wants any resolution torpedoed. Yediot and Israel Radio reported the Arab League demands that the Goldstone report be moved to the Security Council, where a resolution would be passed, demanding that senior IDF officers be tried for war crimes. Yediot quoted an official in the U.S. representation to the U.N. as saying that the Arabs will agree to compromise and soften the resolution draft, which would lead the U.S. to remove its expected veto.

Leading media reported that today IDF Intelligence head General Amos Yadlin told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday that Hamas has recently tested a missile capable of reaching targets at a distance of 60 kilometers -- putting Tel Aviv within missile range. The missile was fired into the Mediterranean Sea. The MI chief said this latest development is indicative of the Hamas regime's growing military capabilities.

Maariv reported that in a cautious but reasonable peace plan, Kadima Knesset Member Shaul Mofaz is overtaking his party leader Tzipi Livni from the Left. Maariv cited Mofaz's belief that Livni is still mired in the Annapolis process which has failed to produce any results and succeeded only in delaying the peace process. He proposes giving the Palestinians a state immediately -- with interim borders that will be comprised of Areas A and B and contain 99% of the Palestinian people. Mofaz is prepared to discuss for the first time transferring sovereignty over large neighborhoods and villages to the Palestinian state and about special arrangements in Jerusalem's holy basin.

The Jerusalem Post quoted the Jerusalem-based NGO Ir Amim that a proposed southeast Jerusalem neighborhood will encroach on land allocated by the Jerusalem Master Plan as a green zone.

The media reported that Donald Bostrom, a Swedish journalist who caused outrage in Israel with allegations that IDF soldiers harvested organs of dead Palestinians and trafficked in them defended his article yesterday to a largely hostile audience in Dimona. Speaking at a media conference, where he was frequently interrupted by hecklers, Bostrom admitted he had no proof beyond the allegations of the families of Palestinians killed by the Israeli army.

The media reported that Shabtai Kalmanovich, a long-term Soviet spy and later a Shin Bet informant, was murdered in Moscow yesterday, in what experts called an act of revenge by business rivals. Former Knesset Member Shmuel Flatto-Sharon told Israel Radio this morning that Kalmanovich let him know that he had spied on the U.S., not on Israel.

All media, except the ultra-Orthodox newspapers, led with the admission by Russian immigrant Dmitry Olegovich Kiriluk that he stabbed to death the six members of the Oshrenko family in Rishon LeZion on October 17. Two years ago Kiriluk was fired from an Oshrenko-owned restaurant where he worked as headwaiter.

Mideast:

Block Quotes:

1. "There's No Peace of the Weak"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/3): The President's basic error was linking the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with his reconciliation policy with the Muslim world. Thus he drove Abbas to set every condition he could muster. What negotiations begin by making concessions in advance? And how can Obama pressure the Palestinians after tying the conflict's resolution to reconciliation with the Muslim world?... The main pressure has now shifted from Netanyahu to Abbas, who is setting unrealistic conditions. You don't give first, then talk. First you talk and then you give. There is only one business in which clients pay first, and it's not the peace-agreement business. Defense Minister Ehud Barak was right when he said, What do you care if they build a little, we'll evacuate most of the settlements in the end anyway. There is no justification for setting preconditions to opening negotiations.

Everything must be open and on the table, not as dictates but as bargaining chips. Abbas did not respond to Netanyahu's Qalmost historicQ proposal for Qtwo states for two peoples.Q Israel would have to negotiate the fate of more than a quarter of a million settlers as part of this proposal. What more does Abbas want, to agree to resume talks on the two-state principle? An observer familiar with politicians' shtick believes that Bibi is doing nothing and will continue to do nothing. QHe's lucky Obama is emerging as a nothing, that Abbas is a nothing, and that nothing will happen," he said. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has won the jackpot in the form of his planned meeting with Obama. He is marking time and Abbas is marking time.... The Camp David we knew was not a basis for a peace of the weak. The last time we were there the second Intifada broke out.

II. "On Jewish Terrorists"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/3): QThe blanket repudiation by the settlers of the crimes attributed to [Yaakov] Teitel is significant for its resonance within the settler community and beyond. Egregiously, one Hebrew tabloid columnist insisted that the suspect's neighbors could not possibly have been ignorant while he planned his crimes. For many years now, television's popular Eretz Nehederet [QWonderful CountryQ] comedy program has parodied American immigrants in the West Bank as gun-toting religious fanatics. In that kind of climate, there may be an inclination within the settler movement to circle the wagons and resist introspection.... A not-insignificant minority of religious settlers has broken away from mainstream Zionism; their allegiance is no longer to the state. To the extent that they listen to anyone, it is to renegade rabbis who countenance political violence. Their followers can be seen accosting security personnel and throwing stones at passing Arab motorists. Behind the scenes, responsible settler leaders are struggling to end such behavior. Now is the time for communal leaders to demarcate anew an indelible red line against violence -- whether directed at Arabs or Jews.... Troubled souls must not be left to their own devices. And settler leaders -- especially rabbis -- must advocate opposition to murderous political violence as fervently as they champion the [Greater] Land of Israel itself.

III. "HeQs One of Ours"

Naama Katiee, who is working on a masterQs thesis on radical religious Zionism and postmodern discourse at Tel Aviv UniversityQs Cohn Institute, wrote in Ha'aretz (11/3): QRight-wing rabbis have hastened to dissociate themselves from Yaakov (Jack) Teitel, the QJewish terrorist.Q Instead, they are trying to place him in the same category as the perpetrators of other recent shocking murders.... The State of Israel is no longer perceived [by religious Zionists] as part of things. At best, it's a secular country that has outlived its role and is no longer relevant to the messianic process.... Religious Zionism is morphing into a fear of defilement and is increasingly turning the QothersQ into the Qtainted. Teitel, like [mass-murderer Baruch] Goldstein and Yigal Amir before him, is merely the executor acting on behalf of a radical ideology that can also be expressed in delicate and moderate terms, so it is spreading fairly widely in the religious community. Teitel is not alone.

IV. "Freedom of Expression?"

Conservative Op-Ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/3): QYaakov Teitel does not represent the Right, just as [self-exiled Israeli-Arab politician] Azmi Bishara does not represent the Left. However, such wild weeds grow amidst a public atmosphere that grants them legitimacy. It doesnQt take an entire sector. There is a need for fanatics who know how to produce an atmosphere. And theyQre quite successful at that. The current mayhem following the exposure of the Jewish terrorist will subside in a day or two. The next victim is only a matter of time.

IV. QThe Real Condition for Resolving the Conflict

Professor Eyal Zisser, the Chairman of the Department of Middle Eastern History at Tel Aviv University, wrote in the online service nanal0.co.il (11/3): QThe past number of weeks have demonstrated that the Palestinian national movement has not learned anything from its history. In the shadow of the incessant efforts of U.S. President Barack Obama to promote Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the Palestinians have been hard put to close ranks and to report to the negotiating table as an effective partner. And so, instead of investing all of their efforts in promoting their agenda with Washington and Israel, the Palestinians find themselves mired up to their necks in the bloody conflict between Hamas and Fatah.... We could have just left the Palestinian to sink into the swamp of their own making. Th problem is that an intra-Palestinian struggle hs a direct bearing on Israel. In the absence of a effective and legitimate Palestinian leadership, it will be impossible to advance on the path to eace. That is on the optimistic assumption thatamong the Palestinians or, at the very least, among the moderates among them, there is historic willingness to advance towards peace. After all, even when the Palestinians had an accepted and strong leadership, and I am referring to Yasser Arafat, we remained far from peace. Palestinian-Palestinian peace is an essential condition for peace to be achieved. Without such peace or, alternatively, without the suppression of Hamas and the imposition of the Palestinian Authority's control over all the Palestinian territories, it will be very hard to advance anywhere or to ensure quiet and stability over time. But at preset, in light of the profound animosity between the vying Palestinian camps, it is hard to envision such reconciliation occurring.... The argument that Israel has the ability to advanceQtra-Palestinian reconciliation is baseless. The experience drawn from Iraq, Afghanistan and also the Palestinian Authority territories demonstrates that those things that the local population is incapable of either achieving or making manifest on its own will remain unattainable no matter who, and certainly not a foreign, external and Western force, intervenes on its behalf. And so we are left with another missed Palestinian opportunity for which some people will try to blame Israel. But ultimately the ball will roll back into the Palestinian court. The ones who proved to have the inability to lead to stand strong and, by so doing, brought upon themselves and upon his people tragedy after tragedy, is the one who bears responsibility. The problem is that we are probably going to have to share paying the price.

VI. QThe Sane Times Have Gone

Liberal columnist Professor Aviad Kleinberg wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/3): QOne would say that the Israeli Left has never been an authentic social movement -- it was the Qpeace camp.Q This camp no longer exists in Israel. It is not Yigal Amir who eliminated the peace camp, but Ehud Barak, when he finally proclaimed the disappearance of a partner. It was comfortable for Israeli society to hold on to a conception that absolved it of all responsibility. The other side -- and only that side Q is responsible for the continuation of the conflict. All the rest -- our narrow-mindedness, the brutality -- is white noise. Those who claim otherwise are anti-Semites.... [Since the last Israeli elections] we have been cramming in IsraelQs center. That packing movement has almost insensibly pushed us rightwards.

CUNNINGHAM